

the emancipation imperative that runs through Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan and to today, we are in a sad state. I trust we wake up while there is still time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TANCREDO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WESTMORELAND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of South Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PENCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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OUR ONGOING MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BOUSTANY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor tonight to talk about the ongoing military and diplomatic mission in Iraq and to discuss the recent testimonies given to Congress by General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Make no mistake, the situation in Iraq is the most significant issue that we, in Congress, face today. Our troops on the frontlines of the battlefield, our constituents back home, and the world look upon the actions and the debates in this body to determine our resolve.

First, let me thank the men and women serving in our Armed Forces, the diplomatic corps who are serving in that country, and our Foreign Service officers on the ground who all serve so nobly under difficult circumstances. They make our Nation great. And we owe them a debt of gratitude that can never be adequately repaid.

There are three observations that I have that drive my views and understanding of the current efforts being made in Iraq. First, the plan that was implemented about a year ago is working. General Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker are leading an effort to bring stability into Baghdad and areas throughout Iraq because they have the flexibility and the necessary resources to respond to changes on the ground. This plan is more than just simply 30,000 troops in country. The troops are placed strategically.

And we also have civilian personnel and diplomats on the ground working to help build up the political institutions from the ground up as we work with the central government so that hopefully as the two meet, we will end up with a stable Iraq that has sovereignty that can protect its borders and that can build institutions on its own and that can protect minority rights. Second, America can complete this mission successfully. Given the appropriate support and guidance, our troops and diplomats will succeed. And third, clearly, challenges remain. Both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker outlined these challenges.

The positive trends as a result of this plan continue from last summer, and we will highlight those. But we understand many challenges remain before us, and clearly these challenges were outlined by these two gentlemen before Congress. I want to mention that fail-

ure in Iraq would have serious repercussions and dire consequences for U.S. foreign policy as well as for global security.

Most importantly, our efforts to stop terrorist organizations would be hindered. Secondly, the ability for us and others to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will become much more difficult. Thirdly, efforts to minimize Iran's dangerous mischief in this region will be diminished. And finally, stabilizing the broader Middle East will be exceedingly difficult if we fail in Iraq. Clearly, the cost and the consequences of failure are far too high.

As Members of Congress, we must listen to the professional judgments of the American leadership we have currently serving in Iraq and work with them to create and support policies that will successfully complete our mission.

Congress has a serious responsibility here. These two gentlemen and the work that they have done in Iraq has been outstanding and should be applauded. And we need to support them. And we need to have a serious debate here in Congress on what steps we need to take to continue to support this effort so that we are successful in Iraq.

Tonight, my colleagues and I will offer our thoughts on the situation there in Iraq, our reflections from recent trips and how we have moved forward. I want to encourage everyone who is listening to seek out and read the testimony of General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker. Read it carefully because it is very thoughtfully put together. They have provided an unvarnished account of what is happening on the ground, and it is the most accurate assessment of the situation. And that is what policy should be based upon. This House now has the responsibility to the American people to truthfully assess their testimonies.

At this point, I would like to pause and introduce my good friend from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY). He is a member of the Armed Services Committee. He heard the testimony this afternoon, and he'll make some comments.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana, my friend, my classmate of the Class of 2005. I am glad to be with you tonight. I did sit today through General Petraeus' testimony, as well as Ambassador Crocker's testimony, and then later in the afternoon, we heard from both General Richard Cody, as well as General Robert Magnus, Army Vice Chief, and the Marine Corps Vice Chief respectively, on the status of our current forces. And I would like to talk about kind of a combination of those conversations that we heard today.

Ambassador Crocker was asked, what does success look like in Iraq? We ought to know both sides of the equation, both sides of the coin of success and failure. He described "success" in Iraq as an Iraq that is developed into a

united, stable country with a democratically elected government that operates under the rule of law. And that is a path that they are on to.

Ambassador Crocker also said today that just because something is hard, as this mission is, does not make it impossible, does not mean it is hopeless simply because it is hard. We have seen some progress on the government side, the national government as well as the provincial government side, in making progress. This surge, as it has been described, was intended to reduce violence as your chart shows. It was intended to allow the government to begin to function in an atmosphere where daily death was not an issue, but they could have the conversations and the sharp disagreements from a debate standpoint on how to run that country. And they have made some progress, not nearly as much we would like, but Ambassador Crocker pointed out today that something as simple as an Iraqi flag, the Council of Representatives and the leadership have adopted a national flag that now flies throughout the country. The Kurds would not fly the flag that had flown previous to that because it had such a connection to Saddam Hussein. And so something just as simple as rallying around a single flag, and we all know how important our flag is to us in its representation to our country, they have been able to do that, and now a common Iraqi flag flies over that country.

They have executed a 2008 budget recently in September which provides for record amounts of infrastructure spending, oil revenues that they are getting from these record high oil prices that they are now plowing back into the infrastructure that every government would have to do that is in that circumstance. They have passed a pension law that addresses some of the pension issues related to people that were there. They have passed an accountability and justice law after vigorous debate on both sides because this deals with de-Baathification, in other words, that process of bringing those Iraqi citizens who had previously been Baath party members under Saddam Hussein, ferreting out those who had sold out to Saddam's thuggery and really just have to be retired, and those who simply were members of the Baath party in order to have a job, in order to be a schoolteacher, in order to be a local administrator. They passed a Provincial Powers Act which deals with the elections that are coming up in October, elections which now all major parties have endorsed and they are going to support and will come to the table including the Sunnis.

And these are not earth shattering. They are not all that they need to do. But this is a clear line of march down a path that this surge, with its sacrifices that had been made, has provided a space to get that done, and they are making progress. We all want them to make much more progress than they have made. We want them to

be quicker than they have currently been.

Today, General Petraeus told us that his team on the ground seized the successes that they have had and take great comfort in that. They take great pride in what they are doing. One of the issues that comes up is continuing to replace the number of folks in our Army that we need, I'm speaking specifically of the Army. Third, he told us today the third I.D. has met its April goal for total re-enlistments already just from people serving in Iraq. General Cody participated in a re-enlistment service earlier this month in Iraq. Men who were defending their country today signed up for additional tours and additional extensions on their service to this country, which is an incredibly heartening issue.

As I said, "hard" does not mean hopeless. But imagine how much easier this fight would be if every American recognized enemy propaganda for what that really is and could parse that out of what we try to think about. Imagine if every American would not tolerate inaccurate reporting and biased reporting out of our media, how much easier our tasks might be. Imagine if all those Americans who oppose this war, and have every right to, would refrain from using rhetoric that is cast just to discourage our fighters, just to cause our veterans to question their service to our country.

And the easy one is imagine how much easier this fight would have been had Congress provided the funding on a timely basis through the supplemental process that we have been doing it on. We have a large supplemental that is hung up. It was requested last summer, and this Congress has sat on its fist, leaning back on its thumb for 7 months now, waiting for who knows what. I think it is waiting until next week rolls around, quite frankly.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Would the gentleman yield? I want to amplify on that. That delay really caused a lot of problems, particularly as the State Department tried to mobilize its part of the surge. It really froze their efforts for a while, and so there was a delay in getting those personnel on the ground to amplify what was being done from a security standpoint.

And I was meeting yesterday with SSG Paul Gwimes in my office. He served with the 256th in Iraq. He told me, and I have seen this when I have gone over there on two previous occasions, our men and women watch these news programs, and they watch C-SPAN, and they hear what we say. And it has an impact. We need to do everything we can to support them. I yield back to my friend.

Mr. CONAWAY. I thank my colleague for that.

More on the spending issue, which is totally within the Members of this body's control, starting with the leadership of this House, dictates the pace at which that legislation should come to us. We should have already dealt

with it a long time ago. But since we haven't, there are some pending consequences for not getting that done quickly.

By mid June, the military personnel account will be exhausted, and all military services will have to begin shifting money around, which, again, is just a back office accounting thing. But it delays purchasing the long lead items that are necessary to be bought out of this supplemental. This supplemental is intended not only to pay for the fight that is going on immediately, but it is also to pay for replacement of equipment and gear that is being destroyed and worn out as we fight this fight. That gear is special. You don't go down to your local Ford dealer and pick up a pickup truck. It takes long lead times to actually get that money set in place. So while we casually ignore it, we do so at the peril of our young men and women who fight this fight.

I want to recount to you a story. I've been to Iraq five times now to visit our troops and hug their necks and tell them "thank you." Probably my most memorable trip was Christmas Day of 2006. I was there with IKE SKELTON and a couple of other Members of Congress. And it was particularly meaningful to be away from my family and be with men and women who are away from their families, to share that experience. I was only away from my family for about 5 or 6 days, nothing like the 15-month deployments that our men and women are enduring right now. But nevertheless, it was great to be there with them.

At Camp Victory, we went out to a perimeter fence where this particular Kentucky National Guard unit was guarding this fence for the base. And a Lieutenant Colonel Lutrell had come out, having just returned from a trip outside the wire. He had gone to a mosque. You could see the minarets just across our fence. And he had gone over there to talk to the cleric about some sort of a neighborhood watch program because of what was happening. There was an elementary school right near there that some Shia gunmen and thugs were sneaking into and using that platform to shoot at our men and women walking that wire. So this lieutenant colonel had gone to the imam, or cleric, there, because it was a Sunni neighborhood. He said, we could work out a deal. If you just give us the heads up, we will stop that. It helps you because they are just trying to force us to fire back at them into the school. And they were taking the chance of hurting their guys. So he was discussing with us about what was going on. And a young buck sergeant kind of eased up to kind of the back side of the deal. And I was standing looking at the name tags, and it was Lieutenant Colonel Lutrell and it was Sergeant Lutrell. And when I got a chance to say something, I said, you two men have the same last name. And the lieutenant colonel said, let me introduce you to

my son, Sergeant Lutrell. And my comment was, sir, your wife and his mother must be a saint to be able to endure having two very, I assume, very important men in her life in harm's way. But that is indicative of the kind of commitment to country, commitment to duty, and commitment to that flag that is played out hundreds and hundreds and thousands of times every single day over the last 6 or 7 years that we have been in the fight, good men and women stepping forward, putting education on hold, putting families on hold, putting family decisions on hold, while they went to do a job that not very many people are qualified to do, not very many people are willing to do.

So in the words of Ambassador Crocker today, our current course is hard, but it is working.

I look forward to some additional dialogue with my good colleague a little later in this hour.

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Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the gentleman.

I would like to now yield time to my good friend Judge CARTER from Texas. He is a member of the Appropriations Committee and the Foreign Operations Subcommittee. He knows a little bit about what is going on in Iraq. He has been there. I would love to hear what he has to say.

Mr. CARTER. I thank my friend for yielding, and I thank my friend for holding this special order this night where we try to lay the truth out about what is going on with our soldiers.

I have had the opportunity to go to Iraq on four different occasions and visit with soldiers. I am a blessed Congressman in that I have the very privilege and honor of representing Fort Hood, Texas. Fort Hood, Texas, is the only two division post in America, and both of those divisions are now famous for operations that have taken place in Iraq.

The 4th Infantry Division, one of the divisions at Fort Hood, captured Saddam Hussein. The 1st Cavalry Division put on a free election in Baghdad. Both were major accomplishments in this war, major accomplishments in the future of Iraq, and the blood, sweat and tears that went into those projects have been brought back to central Texas on numerous occasions. So it is clearly an honor for me to be able to stand up and talk about what is going on in Iraq and why we, in my opinion, my humble opinion, and I think the opinion of those who really think about the issues, it is my opinion that we must stay the course.

What I want to be able to promise, I want to look every soldier that I see, and I see soldiers every week because I go back home every week and I go visit these soldiers, and I see them and I tell them what I want for them is I want them to come home, just like every American wants those soldiers to come home. But when the 4th Infantry Divi-

sion, III Corps and the 1st Cavalry Division and all those the other fine soldiers march out of Iraq, I want to see them marching out under "The Star Spangled Banner" and the red, white and blue, and not the white flag, and that is what they want too.

Every soldier I have spoken to, bar none, has told me they are doing a good job, they are winning, they will win, they want to stay the course. They want to finish the job they started. They say they owe it to their fallen comrades. They owe it to the effort they have put forward on behalf of humanity in Iraq.

I get real upset and tired when I hear people ragging on and insulting and writing stories about the "evil American soldier." The evil American soldier that they describe doesn't exist. American soldiers are some of the closest things to sainthood that I have seen, because they are willing to stand up and fight for people, in many cases that don't even like them.

But what is really wonderful and what has changed in Iraq and what needs to be recognized by everyone is the last time I was over there in July, previous to that I was over there in May of 2006. First let me tell you, May of 2006 the weather was a lot better than the last day of July in 2007, and it was, as we say in Texas, it was hotter than a \$3 pistol over there. But, seriously, when I went over this time, the difference was the interaction between ordinary Iraqi civilians and United States marines and United States soldiers. And they all talked about it at length, and I saw it demonstrated.

Prior to that time, I had never seen an Iraqi policeman anywhere. When we were in Ramadi, there was a pickup truck full of policemen on every corner and they were patrolling the streets, and people, ordinary people, were doing ordinary business in an area that had at one time been the bloodiest battlefield in Iraq, where they had pounded each other for days across this five-lane road. Now, ordinary Iraqi citizens of all ages, dressed all different ways, men and women and children, were walking, going about ordinary business there, addressing United States soldiers and United States marines, talking to them, discussing things with them, discussing things with their local politicians. It was an amazing turnaround. Amazing.

I talked to a young soldier, he couldn't have been more than about 19, a tow-headed kid, and I said, "Tell me how it has changed?" He said, "Well, sir, you know, they plant these explosive devices in these streets and they plant them in the curbs and they plant them in garbage cans." He said, "Boy, we used to crawl down these streets, watching everything, looking everywhere, just really concerned that the next step might blow up on us. Now we approach the streets and a member of the Friends of Iraq," I believe it is called, they have a belt across their chest, "steps out and says, 'Excuse me,

but don't go down this street. There is an explosive device planted in the middle of street. The arms of the other explosives are in that blue building over there. And one block over, the green front building, that is where the guys who planted it are.'" He said, "Sir, that makes life a whole lot easier for a marine patrolling the streets here." You know what? That is a good story, because that is Iraqis talking to soldiers.

We visited with sheiks, and they told us that they had come to the realization when al Qaeda began to kidnap their families and try to make them take certain positions by kidnapping their families, they realized, like a revelation, who the bad guys were.

Americans had never kidnapped their families. Americans had never intimidated them in that fashion. They had never seen anything from American soldiers but trying to help, picking up the garbage, trying to make the sewer work, trying to make the electrical plant work. And then they realized these people were kidnapping their children and in many instances killing their children to try to pressure the sheiks to get their tribes to do certain things. So the sheiks said, that is it. That is it. We have had enough of this. And they went to their tribes and they told them, we are going to join the Americans.

These were Sunnis. So the first thing, of course, that we had to be concerned about was we hear so much about the difference between Sunnis and Shias, the sectarian violence. Was this going to create a rift in Iraq? We heard this story.

We have got General Funk who is a very good friend of mine who lives in my district. His son is in command in another location in Iraq. I also went to visit him while I was over there. He is a colonel. He told me that the week before, I think it was 11 or 12 Shiite sheiks came to his place where he was settled in and wanted to meet him and said, "We have decided to join in helping the Americans get rid of al Qaeda." So that is the whole story.

Those of us who can remember back to the Vietnam War, we were told we were going to win the hearts and the minds of the people and that is how you won this type of war. We haven't heard that term in this war, but I remember that term. And the difference is, we never quite won the hearts and minds of the people because of mistakes that were made.

General Petraeus' plan was to capture the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people on our side, and I believe he is succeeding, and I believe, given the tools, he will continue to succeed. I can tell you one thing, he has got the best fighting force that ever walked on this Earth and the best bunch of human beings that are trying to help him do it, and we should support them in every form or fashion. That is what I think this war is all about. That is how we will walk out under the red, white and blue, and not a white flag.

So I thank my friend for yielding to me.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank my friend. That is very compelling.

I had a similar situation back in August when we went to Fallujah, and I want to pay tribute to General Walter Gaskin, because he was on the ground, a Marine general, implementing this plan through Fallujah. They used their resources strategically to reach out to these sheiks and local leaders and tribal leaders, and it made all the difference in the world.

I remember loading up in an MRAP with him in a conveyer. We drove into Fallujah, and it was the most remarkable thing I have done since I have been a Congressman, because just weeks before, General Gaskin told us you couldn't go down this road without hitting an IED or getting shot at.

So we drove around some of the streets of Fallujah and then we got out and walked. And we walked four or five blocks to a joint security station with our marines and with the Iraqi police. And the first marine I came up to at the security station happened to be from my district in Abbeville, and we traded stories and talked about good Cajun food and all that. But I sure was proud of him. I called his parents when I got back and we talked.

You know, it just makes you feel good knowing these young men and women are just dedicated and they are doing what they have to do, and they are the best that humanity has to offer. I agree with you, Judge.

Then we met with the precinct police colonel who was so proud of the efforts, and he showed us how much success they had had because they were implementing Iraqi solutions to the security in Fallujah. And now Fallujah is growing. The population is coming back. Businesses are opening.

I walked into a small shop and met a shopkeeper with his young son and talked with them through a translator. We handed out candy to children in the streets. We encountered a group of young children playing soccer in the streets, another group of adolescents and young men playing volleyball, and it was quite a remarkable scene to experience. So I had a similar situation, and it is really a tribute to our men and women who are down there on the ground doing this job.

Mr. CARTER. Absolutely. You know, a story I love to tell, because it was so funny, KEVIN BRADY, our colleague from Texas, was a chamber of commerce representative for a long time before he came to Congress. Of course, he worked for the local county commissioners, courts and city council and things like that.

Well, when we were in Ramadi we walked into the market, and there was this old man, and he looked like the ancient age, sitting in the chair in front of a kind of a destroyed shop. Right next door was another shop where a guy was putting wares out and getting ready to sell something. We

were walking in with the general and also with the newly-elected mayor.

Well, immediately he called to have the mayor come over there, and he told the mayor, he said, "Look," he said. "You fixed his shop up. I want to know what the timetable is for fixing my shop up." And the mayor said, "Oh, well, you know, we are getting the resources in. We will get it done." He said, "Well, I am going to hold you to your promise, and I am going to come by the city hall and I am going to check on this, because I need my shop up so I can start operating too."

BRADY leaned over to me and says, "It sounds like somebody at the city council meeting in The Woodlands in Texas."

So, you know, that is the kind of normalcy we want to see start to happen, where people are starting to think about living their life, not dodging and ducking for their life. So to me that is a good story. That is a story that says peace is breaking out in some small area anyway, because this little old man wanted his shop open. That is a great story.

Mr. BOUSTANY. That peace is breaking out because of this plan that has been implemented. And we have seen dramatic results, yet those results are still fragile and still tenuous, as both Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus have stated. But yet it is real progress, and we have an obligation to continue on this path so that we eventually see real stability in Iraq.

Mr. CARTER. Yes, we do. Yes, we do. You know, it is very important, there has been a lot of talk about this latest fight down in Basra. Fifteen thousand Iraqis went into the fight there and there has been a lot of talk about over 1,000 of those Iraqis ran. That is kind of looking at that glass half full or half empty. Yes, maybe 1,000 or more soldiers turned and ran, but 14,000 stayed and fought.

If you went 3 years ago when I went on my second trip to Iraq and I sat down at a dinner table with a bunch of ordinary soldiers and said what are we trying to accomplish over here? And they said, sir, when they think about their units the way we think about our units, they will be a qualified fighting force over here, and we are trying to instill that in them.

I say 14,000 of them acted like soldiers, and that is something we should be proud of.

Mr. BOUSTANY. That is absolutely true and important. Not only that, Prime Minister al-Maliki made the decision to employ those troops in Basra, to take it into his own hands, and that was a huge move, because before he was afraid to confront the Jaish al-Mahdi and those insurgents. Not only that, Muqtada al-Sadr was partly responsible for helping position Maliki in as prime minister, and before he refused to take action against them when they are were doing unlawful activities.

For him to take that step was large. It was huge. And even though oper-

ationally it didn't go as smoothly as we hoped, it was a big step for them to go forward to do this, and that is a sign that things have changed. And we are seeing a change at the central level as well as what has been accomplished at the local level. As those two efforts merge, we will see a stable Iraq.

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Mr. CARTER. That's right. I thank the gentleman for recognizing me.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Now I would like to yield some time to a good friend who has been patiently waiting here, Dr. GINGREY of Georgia, a fellow physician, a member of the Armed Services Committee who has traveled to Iraq, and we would like to hear what he has to say.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank my colleague from Louisiana, my fellow physician, for yielding. It's great to be here with two fine Texans, my classmate Judge CARTER and also Mr. CONAWAY, and talk about this important issue, because this is a very important week.

Representative CONAWAY and I both serve on the House Armed Services Committee, and my colleagues, Madam Speaker, as you, of course, know, you are a member of the committee as well, that we heard from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker here on the House side. The Foreign Affairs Committee did as well yesterday, the same thing on the Senate side.

It was also just unbelievable the negative approach and attitude that so many members of our committee, this body, the other body, the majority party, had toward them in September, saying, you know, this surge is too little too late, the war is lost, it's a hopeless cause, there's nothing that you can do militarily, and, besides, there are all these benchmarks that the Iraqi Government has not met, and it's a failed state, we need to bring the troops home.

Well, thank God we did not bring the troops home at that time. Here we are, 10 months later, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker returned and reported to the Congress. Almost every, indeed, every measure, every metric that you look at, they presented to us in chart form. Dr. BOUSTANY has one of those charts with him tonight in regard to the decrease in civilian deaths. He may want to talk about that later, but there is no question that in regard to security, tremendous, tremendous progress has been made. We are getting on top of this thing, and General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker both said that.

There were questions from Members, particularly on the Democratic side of the aisle, on the House Armed Services Committee, to suggest that while there was progress made militarily, there was none, no progress made politically.

These points were addressed, these questions to Ambassador Crocker, about, well, how about all these benchmarks that we asked for back in September?

Well, you know, the fact is the political surge, my colleagues, has been just about as successful as the military surge, and the progress that we have made, and Congressman CONAWAY talked about that just a little bit earlier in regard to de-Ba'athification, and he explained what is meant by that, and I know my colleagues understand that, to bring these people back in, the Sunnis that didn't have jobs, they had no way of surviving other than maybe getting paid to do bad things to our troops and to their Shia countrymen.

It was important that the Iraqi Government do that. The Iraqi Government scheduled provincial elections, which are now scheduled for October of this year, that the Iraqi Government do something in regard to oil sharing to actually have legislation in place that spells out that just because the oil in the country of Iraq happens to be located in maybe a Shia area or a Kurdish area, that the Sunnis still, as fellow Iraqis, should have a share in that revenue.

Well, de facto, they are doing that. Ambassador Crocker basically told us that of the 18 benchmarks, 12 of them have now been met, and that of the additional 6, there is significant progress on 4.

Anyone that suggests that there is not progress made politically just has to have a willing suspension of disbelief, as someone in the other body quoted, I think, last year and actually said that, too. I wonder what she would say today, based on these statistics, to ignore these metrics, would require the willing suspension of brain power. It is clear as the nose on your face, but yet certain people refuse to believe it.

What distresses me too now is those Members who want us to come home are using a different argument. They are saying not only that we've spent too much money but also making this statement, and if my colleague will bear with me for a couple of more minutes, they are making the statement that our troops are tired, they have been there too long, the equipment is wearing out and that, God forbid, there may be another conflict that's just going to break out somewhere in the world, which does occur, I guess, on average, maybe every 5 years.

They are saying that for that reason, totally ignoring what success we have achieved on the ground, that we really have victory almost in the palm of our hands. It's not there yet, it's fragile. We all admit that. But let's bring them home and prepare them for the next conflict.

Well, my colleagues, they may be, these troops that Judge CARTER, Mr. CONAWAY and Dr. BOUSTANY talked about, these personal anecdotes that they gave tonight, in talking about the enthusiasm, the morale and the patriotism of these troops, if you bring them back home when they are just on the cusp of victory, having left, then, 4,000 of their colleagues dead, men and women, and probably 25,000 severely

wounded, they come home without a victory, like Judge CARTER says, with a white flag rather than Old Glory, I don't care how much you rest them, I don't care how much you re-equip them, I don't care how much you give them, more manpower or reset them, when you send them to this next contingency, I am going to ask them how hard they are going to fight. What's their morale going to be like then?

I think that's what this is all about. I think that's what the American people need to understand and that's what our colleagues in this body need to understand.

We cannot let public opinion polls and political pressure, because of an upcoming election, drive the decisions that are so important to the safety and security and the well-being of this country. I think it's clear, it was very clear to me. I had this very question written out that I wanted to ask General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

Unfortunately, as my colleagues know, if you are down on the lower row, Madam Speaker knows that, a lot of times they don't get to you before the clock runs out. I did submit this for the RECORD. I would like to know the answer to that question, I think the answer will be just as exactly as I expect. We can't worry about the next battle, we have got to win this one first.

I wanted to make those points to my colleagues. At this point I will yield back to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. CARTER. If you would yield for just a moment.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. CARTER. Hearing the comments of Dr. GINGREY, I was at the Vets for Freedom rally this morning, and someone read an e-mail that they had received from a captain in the field, and he said, it went something like this, I started my morning at daybreak, and I have been on three missions today. I have gotten home and I immediately went and checked the evening news, as we all do here in Iraq, to see what folks were saying back home, and I saw someone say "I support the warriors, but I don't support the war." He said, "Sir, we are the war."

I think that's something we ought to remember. As far as they are concerned, not supporting their effort is not supporting them. We need to remember that before we hurt feelings.

Mr. BOUSTANY. Every American should remember that.

Mr. GINGREY. If the gentleman would yield just for a second, just to follow up on what Judge CARTER said, yes, this rally he was talking about was over on the Senate side in the park. JOHN MCCAIN, of course, was there and got such a round of applause and appreciation for his stance, his service, his patriotism, his service, his suffering during the Vietnam war. I stood on the dais with my fellow Mem-

bers in a bipartisan way, there were Democrats there as well. I felt real proud.

I looked at these young veterans for freedom, just looking at their faces, one of them in the back had a sign, and the sign said "General Petraeus, he is General Hooray Us," General Hooray Us is a take on what the New York Times did last year when General Petraeus came in anticipation of his testimony, ran that article. Of course, the New York Times didn't run the article, but it printed it. I think MoveOn.org or one of these organizations ran the article, half page, full page that said, "General Petraeus or General Betray Us," a sad point in our history.

God bless these veterans for freedom.

Mr. CARTER. Amen, brother.

Mr. BOUSTANY. That's a perfect lead-in, because I want to talk a little bit about these two gentlemen who are leading this effort on the ground because I don't know if a lot of Americans really know about their background.

General Petraeus was a former commander of the 101st Airborne Division, and as many history buffs will remember, they were very famous for the first deployments behind German lines on D-Day. So that group, that division has a very illustrious history. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell was also a former commander of the 101st Airborne.

Not many people know this, but General Petraeus has a Ph.D. from Princeton University in international relations, and he is also an assistant professor of international relations at West Point.

He is a coauthor of the counter-insurgency manual that our military uses, and that's what they have actually implemented on the ground, and that's why we are seeing this great success.

Ambassador Crocker, there is a quote from his swearing in when he was sworn in as ambassador to Iraq, and I am going to quote Ambassador Crocker. He says, "We have a historic challenge ahead of us. Terrorists, insurgents, militias continue to threaten security in Baghdad and around the country. Security is, without question, the central issue."

In a very real sense it has been for at least the last four decades. I was here in the 1970s. There was no security. Iraqis everywhere lived in terror of the midnight knock on the door. Neighbors were afraid to talk to neighbors. It truly was the republic of fear.

Then came the savage Iran-Iraq war, Saddam Hussein's brutality to his own people, Desert Storm, and finally his overthrow in 2003. Those are all the things that the Iraqi people have had to endure in recent history.

This gentleman has a tremendous background as well. In January 2002 he was sent to Afghanistan to reopen the American embassy in Kabul. He received the Robert C. Frasure Memorial Award for "exceptional courage and

leadership" in Afghanistan. He was ambassador to Pakistan in 2004-2007, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs 2001-2003, and he has served as ambassador to Syria, Kuwait and Lebanon. In fact, he was at post in Lebanon in Beirut when our embassy was bombed there in 1983.

This gentleman has had tremendous experience in the Arab world, as has General Petraeus, and it's one measure of their integrity that they have provided this accurate testimony first back in September and now, to give us an accurate appraisal of what's happening in Iraq.

□ 2030

Now, let's talk a little bit about what is going on and look at a few trends.

I have a chart here that shows by different metrics, two different metrics, the Iraqi and coalition in purple, and in the blue it is coalition data. This shows the trend line. You can see how the number of civilian deaths by both tracks had gone up, particularly in the 2006 and 2007 time frame, and now as we get down to the end of these curves, you get all of the way to March of this year, and you can see the significant improvement in the security situation with regard to civilians throughout Iraq.

How many Iraqi troops do we have there out front now. Currently there are 36 battalions of national police, up from 27 a year ago; and 171 battalions of Iraqi Army up from 115 a year ago. And of those 171 battalions, 112 are taking the lead in the fight against insurgents.

When I was in Baghdad in August, I was able to witness the result of training of the elite Iraqi force that they are sending out front to deal with hostage situations and terrorists and insurgents. It is a remarkable display to watch these gentlemen in action.

Afterwards I talked to some of our Special Forces guys doing the training, and they said they are getting close. They said they will never match up to American Special Forces and Delta Team, but they are pretty good. I got to witness this. It was a sign that this training process that we struggled with on the ground is finally coming to fruition and showing real results.

Next is the chart showing Iraqi security spending. This chart shows in the blue American or U.S. spending in dollars, billions of dollars, on Iraqi security forces. You can see the trend is dropping. We had an upsurge in 2006 and 2007, which was necessary, and now it is trending downward.

In green, look at the Iraqi expenditures going up. That is a significant sign that the Iraqis were committed to this process of taking care of their own security. I think it is critically important to recognize that trend.

Now I want to address the political, economic and social situation for a moment. It is important to recognize that prior to the brutal reign of Saddam

Hussein, Iraq was basically a mosaic of tribes and subtribes, and governance was largely at the local level, dictated by tribal elders, and that is what it reverted to following the takedown of Saddam Hussein. We saw sectarian violence and all the jockeying for position. But at this point as a result of the plan that was implemented a little over a year ago, significant improvements in security have resulted, enabling Iraqis to make progress with their economy. Since the so-called surge began, business registrations have increased by 9 percent. And I know from my experience when I walked through the streets of Fallujah, there were a number of shops open and families were buying goods and food products. We are seeing microlending occurring to get new businesses started.

Iraqis still have a lot of work to do with their economy, and reforms are clearly needed to transition from what was a command-and-control economy to a modern market-based economy because clearly this is a major departure from what they had before.

Centralized electricity generation is now above prewar levels, still not sufficient to meet the needs of Iraq's growing demand, but markedly improved. Other key infrastructure needs are being upgraded, especially energy pipelines and storage facilities. Unemployment is still too high, and corruption still remains a challenge, but things are improving in those areas as well.

Early in the war, the U.S. funded most of the large scale reconstruction projects in Iraq. But now, the U.S. is focusing on encouraging entrepreneurship. This is clearly having positive results. The Iraqi government is now stepping up on reconstruction projects, and they have outspent the U.S. in a recent budget 11:1. That is 11 Iraqi dollar equivalents to \$1 U.S. And soon, they are expected to cover 100 percent of these expenses. This is significant progress. Ambassador Crocker pointed this out in his testimony, and it is very important for Americans out there to understand that there is a transition being made where the Iraqis are going to pay this.

The National Government has now committed \$196 million to fund jobs programs so brave Iraqis who have stood up to extremists and murderers and criminals can learn skills that they need to help build a free and prosperous nation.

In July, the Asian Cup Soccer Tournament was held. This was a very important demonstration of Iraqi nationalism as the Iraqi team, known as the Lions of Two Rivers, beat the three-time champions Saudi Arabia 1-0 in their first appearance in the Asian Cup final. And there was an outpouring of nationalism and public sentiment as a result of that.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) pointed out a number of major political accomplishments: The de-Ba'athification laws that have been

passed that are allowing mid-level and low-level bureaucrats to return to service; the Iraqi leaders have agreed on a budget; and revenue sharing is well underway to get funds down to the provincial local level while the permanent revenue-sharing agreement is still being worked out.

Leaders have reached agreement on provincial powers law which will allow them to hold their provincial and local elections in October. This is a very important development because as I mentioned before, to have the local development and institutions come up while central government develops, as those two efforts meet, that is where we will see stability.

When I was in Baghdad, I met with the deputy prime minister, a Sunni member of the Council of Representatives, and he told me that he felt that Americans were paying too much attention to elections at the central level. He said elections are nice, but elections are like the fruit on the tree. You have to plant the tree, let it establish its roots, and grow. He was talking about institutions that need to develop from the ground up to have long-term stability. I will never forget that metaphor because it really demonstrates what is going on and the power of this plan that is in place that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker have implemented.

Ambassador Crocker said today, in commenting on the events in Basra, "When viewed with a broader lens, the Iraqi decision to combat these groups in Basra has major significance. First, a Shia majority government has demonstrated its commitment to take on criminals and extremists regardless of sectarian identity."

That is a significant development that would not have happened even a year ago.

My friend from Texas, I yield to him.

Mr. CONAWAY. As we draw to the close of this hour, I want to talk briefly about something that also came up in today's conversation. General Petraeus, you went through his resume awhile ago, something that you didn't mention was that he has been deployed overseas, away from his family 4½ years since this fight began in 2001, a significant sacrifice for his family, and in order for him to do the job that we have asked him to do.

He said he is keenly aware, personally as well as for the men and women that he leads, that the impact that multiple deployments have had, the impact of the 15-month deployment instead of the 12-month deployment is having on these troops. He said that they have answered the call every single time and have not yet one time blinked in the face of some incredible sacrifices and commitments that we are asking them to take on.

One of the problems that we face here stateside is that a remarkably small percentage of Americans have been directly involved in this fight. We have a little more than 4,000 families now

whose lives are forever changed as a result of that knock on the door saying that their loved one has been killed in action or killed in one of these two fights in Afghanistan or Iraq. We have 25,000 or so others wounded in some level of severity, some who have returned to the fight, and many who have life-altering circumstances that happened in the blink of the eye. None of them joined our services to get hurt like that; but they have, and they are now facing a different life, a different style of doing things than they ever contemplated before.

They also talked about the men and women who continue to sign up to serve their country. Men and women who know if you join our Army or our Marine Corps today, given this persistent war that we are going to be in, they will fight. This isn't your granddad's army. This is an Army and a Marine Corps that will be asked to fight.

I marvel personally at the strength and resolve and resoluteness that these families exhibit. Individually they have made incredible sacrifices. I get a tiny, little glimpse of the anxiety when I go to Afghanistan and Iraq because of the concern and worry that Suzanne, my wife, has while I am away. You and I when we go are never in harm's way. So that helps me a little bit empathize with what the families back home go through 24 hours a day, 7 days a week when they have a loved one in harm's way. While the loved one in harm's way knows whether or not something scary is going on, the folks back home think it is happening all the time and they live in dread of something bad happening.

In the face of those sacrifices and commitments that we have asked them to make, they are standing tall and re-enlisting in numbers that are appropriate, and new people are coming into the system in numbers that are sufficient to grow the Marine Corps as well as grow the Army which will help shift some of the burden, spread some of the burden out across a larger number of troops.

But I stand in awe of how magnificent these warrior families are, as well as their warriors, doing a job that their Commander-in-Chief has asked them to do and that their Nation has asked them to do, and a fight that I personally believe protects America's interests and also keeps us safer at home than we otherwise would have been.

Mr. BOUSTANY. I thank the gentleman. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to every family who has sacrificed. This is hard, and every American should care about this and be engaged in this process.

I continue to say that the men and women who put on the American uniform are the finest that humanity has to offer because of those sacrifices and what they do. Oftentimes, whether it is Iraq or Afghanistan or some other tough spot, the only American that people in these countries actually get

to see are our American men and women in uniform, and they are oftentimes our finest ambassadors. And so we owe them a whole lot, a great debt of gratitude for what they have done, and we should never forget and always stand up.

I would urge folks, whenever they see someone in uniform, shake their hand and thank them for the service they have provided, and thank their families for the difficulties they have had to go through.

You know, Ambassador Crocker said today, I am going to quote one more time here, "Last September, I said that the cumulative trajectory of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq was upwards, although the slope of that line was not steep. Developments over there, the last 7 months, have strengthened my sense of a positive trend. Immense challenges remain and progress is uneven and often frustratingly slow, but there is progress. Sustaining that progress will require continuing U.S. resolve and commitment. What has been achieved is substantial, and it is also reversible."

That really summarizes where we are today and how important it is that we have the resolve to see this through because the consequences of failure are immense. I mentioned that earlier.

Osama bin Laden himself has made statements about the importance of Iraq to these terrorist activities. I have a quote here. This is Osama bin Laden: "A war is underway. The epicenter of these wars is Baghdad, the seat of the caliphate." The caliphate is what they hope to achieve, an empire, an Islamist, radical empire. "Success in Baghdad will be success for the U.S."

They don't want us to succeed in Baghdad. They want to drive us out.

Let me pull up the next chart.

I want to read this last one. This is in a letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri, the number two of al Qaeda, to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who headed up the al Qaeda effort in Iraq before we were able to eliminate him: "Al Qaeda's stated Iraq strategy consists of three steps: Expel the Americans from Iraq; establish an Islamic authority; and extend the jihad wave to the secular countries neighboring Iraq."

□ 2045

That's important because the countries neighboring Iraq or Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait, and their goal is to overthrow these countries. That's their stated goal over and over in their communications, and that's why it's critical that we have success in Iraq because, again, we won't have peace throughout the Middle East. It'll have dire repercussions with regard to Lebanon.

I didn't mention Iran, which also borders Iraq, and it's a fluid border. And the Iranians are definitely causing mischief, dangerous mischief in Iraq and around the region. That's what's at stake here, and that's why we must be successful in Iraq.

With that, I want to conclude. I want to thank my colleagues for participating in this. I can't help but think of a Gold Star mother back home, Yvette Burridge, who's a friend of mine who's son went to high school with my son in Lafayette, Louisiana, Marine, Private First Class, David Paul Burridge who was killed in action on September 6, 2004 at 19 years of age. And every time I see Yvette Burridge, she has pride in her eyes. She's proud of what her son did. She's proud that he gave his life for his country.

And we all have stories like that that we should commemorate, those who have given their lives and who have been wounded in this effort. But we should never forget this effort. It's critically important to success in American foreign policy and American national security.

HONORING BEN CRENSHAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. RICHARDSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor and pay tribute to an exceptional athlete and distinguished American, Ben Crenshaw.

Architect, historian, gentleman, all of these words correctly portray Ben Daniel Crenshaw. But perhaps the most fitting description for this great golfer is champion.

The people of Augusta, Georgia, who I represent, and golf fans around the world recognize Ben Crenshaw as one of the finest, most talented golfers on the PGA circuit.

Crenshaw has been a phenomenon on the golf course since childhood, winning his first tournament, the Casis Elementary Open, in the fourth grade. He continued to play through middle school and high school, claiming several championship titles. It was clear then that Ben Crenshaw was on his way to greatness.

He made school history during the 1970-71 academic year at the University of Texas when Crenshaw became the first freshman to capture the individual title during the NCAA tournament at the Tuscan National Golf Club. His outstanding accomplishments and victories that year earned Crenshaw the privilege to be named to the 1971 All American collegiate golf team.

Crenshaw's early achievement set the stage for an extraordinary career. His most notable achievements include being a 19-time winner on the PGA tour, captain of the 1999 U.S. Ryder Cup team whose stunning comeback is remembered as one of the most exciting competitions in that match's history.

And he's also a two-time Masters champion. Many will never forget the emotional scene that played out on the 18th green when, in 1995, Crenshaw clinched his second Masters victory and earned yet another green jacket.